

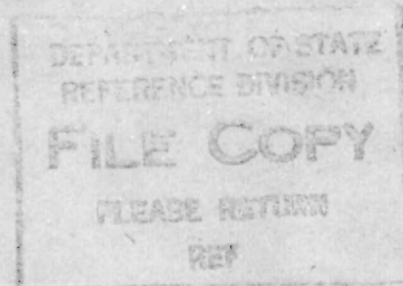
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ATTITUDES OF THE POLISH UNDERGROUND PRESS
TOWARD POLISH-RUSSIAN RELATIONS

Description

Digest of views on Polish-Russian relations
expressed by Polish Underground publications.

7 March 1944

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INTRODUCTION

The following excerpts are translated from an original Polish document, "Review of Underground Press." This review is issued periodically by the Ministry of the Interior of the Polish Government-in-Exile. It is destined for internal use of Polish government agencies only. An introduction bearing the signature of the Minister, Wladyslaw Banaczyk, forbids the release of any part of the text for publication without previously consulting the Ministry of the Interior "owing to the fact that the publication of certain views and comments of the underground press would negatively affect Polish interests."

The issue of the "Review" digested in the following pages contains excerpts from the Underground press for the months June, July, and August 1943. Only publications of the "legitimate" Underground and of the Nationalistic "Fascist Underground" (Pilsudskyites and Radical Nationalists) are reviewed. There are no quotations from publications of the "pro-Soviet" Underground. (The latter are mentioned only in polemics.)

The document is dated London, 20 December 1943 and bears the number L.DZ.K. 7385/43. The report is marked No. 12/43. It consists of 164 pages, divided into the following chapters:

I. Articles on the death of General Sikorski	pp. 1-50
II. Views on the Mikolajczyk Government	51-72
III. Poland, Russia, and the Anglo-Saxons	73-84
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This digest contains excerpts from chapters III and IV.

While it would be unsafe to consider the expressed views as indication of what the masses of people in occupied Poland feel and think, it may be assumed that they are fairly representative of the trends of thought among the traditional Polish political groups (with the exception of the Communists and their sympathizers). This does not mean that the quotations are technically authentic underground material. One can have reasonable doubts as to whether all the publications listed and quoted in the Review are really published inside Poland (especially in such numbers and with such wide circulation as the Government claims, and in such suprisingly perfect technical form as photostats seem to indicate). This circumstance, however, does not impair their political authenticity as expression of the ideas of certain Poles -- particularly Army men, professional politicians, and newspaper writers.

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Walka Ludu (The People's Fight) listed as "organ of a Syndicalist group," on 20 June 1943 arrives at the following conclusions in an article entitled "Imperialism Rebuilding the World":

1. The brutal and nervous way in which Soviet Russia is pressing her demands is an indication of Russia's great exhaustion.
2. Great Britain ceased to play the role of an independent decisive factor in European affairs, since she is controlled by the United States.
3. The United States tends to become the main factor in the building of post-war Europe. It has opposed -- thus far successfully -- all Soviet schemes for European reconstruction and Soviet plans to dominate Europe.
4. The American policy is to let the Soviets bear the brunt of the fight against the Germans for as long as possible, which ought to result in the complete exhaustion of the Soviet Union at the end of the war. On the other hand the United States avoids acceptance of Soviet demands at this moment, which in a way precludes the chances of realizing these demands in a future peace treaty.
5. Having lost hope in the possibility of an early acceptance of her demands by her Allies, Soviet Russia prepares the realization of her annexationist postulates via facti.
6. In these circumstances Poland must prepare and conserve a maximum of forces for the decisive moment of the European struggle.

Biuletyn Informacyjny (listed as "Army paper for the masses"), 23 June 1943 quotes a Hungarian article on plans of confederation for Central Europe, indicating the necessity for Slav as well as non-Slav nations to "oppose the influence of Russia." Benes is criticized as promoter of Russian interests "whose influence in Anglo-Saxon countries is small, since these countries do not want an increase of Russian influences in Eastern Europe." The quoted Hungarian article is termed by the Polish publication as "interesting" and taken as "evidence that there is a great harmony of views between us and the Hungarians."

Polska Walczy, (a Pilsudskyite publication,) 3 July 1943:

"Czech politicians are a tool in Stalin's hands in his schemes to dominate at least one half of Europe. The exiled president of the Czechoslovak Republic, Benes, assumed the role of executor of Moscow's plans..."

The paper assumes that Benes has become Stalin's tool because he fears that the influence of Communists in post-war

Czechoslovakia would deprive him of power. It points out that "unfortunately" Benes is very popular in Czechoslovakia; it is necessary that the Czech people realize that its president has taken the wrong road. "The Czechs must realize that not only Germany is an enemy of the small nations, but also Russia with her eternal imperialism." The only way out is "consolidation under the protection of the great western democracies."

Wiadomosci Polskie, (listed as an Army organ) 30 June 1943; in a long article called "Enemy Ally":

"When Germany attacked the Soviet Union the Poles had a reason to be glad that "both our mortal enemies are at war and will weaken and destroy each other.... From such a configuration in the first World War, Polish independence was born. Its repetition was expected to have similarly favorable results." With the help of Great Britain, Poland extricated itself from the unusual situation of being at war with both Russia and Germany. The treaty of July 1941 gave the Poles two valuable possibilities: (1) The possibility of helping the deported Polish population (2) The creation of a new army. The problem of the Russian-Polish frontier was not discussed at that time because "for us the eastern frontier presented no doubts and no need of additional guarantees."

The subsequent Soviet campaign against Poland, conducted brutally, aggressively, and with the advancement of unjustified demands, alienated England and America and scared the small nations.... Stalin's stubbornness made a bad impression in London and Washington. His avoidance of personal contacts with the leaders of the democracies deepens these feelings.... The inactivity of the Soviets on the Eastern front also helps to cool off the feelings of the Anglo-Saxons which hitherto were too warm. All this allows the conclusion that the Polish problem is considered favorably by the Allies and that the future is very promising. "Therefore we need not worry that we have no diplomatic relations with the USSR. Insofar as practical help for the Poles in Russia is concerned, we could not expect to do much any more. Avoiding contacts with the perpetrators of the Katyn murders will save us many unpleasant moments. We may be sure that our government will not take the initiative to reestablish relations with Soviet Russia and will flatly refuse to consider the so-called conditions of the Soviets for a renewal of diplomatic relations with Poland. Not being at war with Russia we can do without her ("Nie będąc w wojnie z Rosją, możemy się bez niej obywać"). "With our patience and tact we have managed to convince Anglo-Saxon opinion that Poland is not a nation of unbridled ambitions, hazardous ideas, quarrelsomeness.... We have demonstrated experimentally that Russia neither psychologically nor politically has changed since the slaughter of the Czar and his family, the trials of Zinoviev and Tukhachevsky, and the two-faced treaties. While tactically an ally, Russia remains basically an enemy of freedom, democracy, western culture and Christian morals."

Polska Walczy, 3 June 1943 (listed as Pilsudskyite paper):

"It is an inescapable truth that Russia has an innate hatred for and desire to exterminate Poland and everything that is Polish -- culture, habits, way of life, and our very existence...of all nations the Poles are the least inclined to hate and they quickly forget the tendencies of their enemies."

S, (listed as representing the pre-war regime), 9 August 1943:

"The Kosciuszko division is the creation of traitors like Wanda Wasilewska. It is commanded by the obscure Comrade Berling, allegedly a former officer of the Polish army. [Note: Berling was not only Chief of Staff of the Corps area of Cracow before the war, and as such well known, but also one of the top officers in the army of General Anders in Russia7.... The most important fact is that Soviet Russia has no right to create any Polish detachments, because this right is reserved exclusively for the Polish President and the Government.... Russia does not understand this right because she is a country of savage and barbarous moral and political principals. Civilization, international treaties and customs -- these are non-existent ideas for Soviet Russia... No soldier, even of genuine Polish descent, who is not subordinated to the Commander-in-Chief, is a Polish soldier. A Pole serving under Soviet command is a traitor as would be a Pole in the German army, unless he does it under duress and will use the first opportunity to cast off his foreign uniform and submit to Polish commanders. There is only one Polish nation and one Polish army. Stalin's clumsy attempts will prove a complete fiasco as did analogous Bolshevik attempts in 1920 to create a Polish army within the ranks of the Red Army. We do not attach any greater importance to the Soviet propaganda attempts. They are one more proof that the chasm which separates us from everything Soviet Russia stands for cannot be bridged."

Walka Ludu, 19 July 1943 ("Syndicalist" publication).

Only the triumph of the principles of justice and reason in the countries between Germany and Russia will bring about a consolidation of the forces of these countries and their union for the purpose of warding off attacks by Soviet and German imperialism. Only a federation of these states with their 130 million people will effectively check all Soviet-German hostile schemes.... The Polish toiling masses will fight for a consolidation of the countries which are threatened by the Soviet and German imperialism, through the enforcing of justice between the several states and nationalities, as well as between the various social classes."

Wschód (Pilsudskyite), 22 June 1943, in an article called "Lithuanians Must Choose":

"The present war has clearly demonstrated the hypocrisy of the followers of the Comintern and the greediness of the Germans. It also has proved that the collapse of Poland means the end of independence for all smaller nations between the Baltic and the Black Sea. These simple considerations should determine the course of a healthy policy of the Lithuanians. The Germans or the Russians can give the Lithuanians nothing but extermination. Poland, in accordance with her historical traditions, never had and does not have any plans for extermination; most particularly with regard to Lithuania.... We will do everything possible in order to prevent Lithuanian soil from becoming a base for expansion of Soviet imperialism or the theater of German and Russian guerrilla warfare against Poland. We will proceed to the realization of this postulate even if the blindness and ill will of the Lithuanian leaders were against us. We are sure of the support of the Lithuanian masses which begin to demonstrate an increasing understanding of Polish-Lithuanian collaboration."

Biuletyn Slowianski (political affiliation not listed),
30 June 1943:

"We want a strong, truly independent Ukraine, with Kiev, Kharkov, Rostov, reaching to the Don. With that state we want to maintain close relations, eventually leading to a Union.... Naturally because of our greater political and cultural experience, we will have to take the young sister state under our protective influence. The existence of this state is a necessity because of the steady threat to Poland from Russia and Germany. In face of the German danger the Ukraine, united with Poland would perfectly implement with her economic potential the strength of any central European federation, thus making it independent of any foreign sources of raw materials and depriving the Germans of an instrument of diversion. On the other hand, an independent Ukraine would weaken Russia and lessen the Russian danger. Without the Ukraine, Russia ceases to be a danger to Central Europe, and Germany's aggressive possibilities become seriously limited."

The author of the article admits that there may be "technical difficulties" apart from "psychological inhibitions" in effecting this scheme. However, since union with a Free Ukraine is a matter of life for Poland and all Slavs "we must set aside all petty considerations" and make every effort for the realization of the great aim.

Polska Ludowa (listed as a monthly of the Peasant Party),
August 1943; (an article called "Road to Greatness"):

The author takes it for granted that a tendency to crush Poland is a constant historical phenomenon and has always been manifested both by Germany and by Russia. He poses the following question: Can territorially reduced Poland with only 24 million population hope to withstand the pressure of "80 million Germans" and 170 million subjects of the Eastern imperialism? The conclusion is that Poland "cannot be satisfied with some neo-Versailles scrap of territory, because we would be obliterated in one of the future conflicts between East and West." A purely ethnographical Poland can exist only as an ephemera and would be "an advance post and a lightning rod for another Power."

The author points out that the material conditions of Poland's existence are exactly the same as they were throughout the ages. The Polish "Lebensraum" is threatened by "an eternal Hitler and an eternal Stalin, whose programs are identical.... When Hitler and Stalin crossed our frontiers, they broke all treaties with no intention of ever returning to them. We too should not imprison our political thought within these frontiers and in these treaties with them. They belong now to the past.... The Polish nation has all political, moral, and historical possibilities to become the center of a new great political idea, of uniting all the nations between the Baltic and the Black Sea in a voluntary political union based on the principles of freedom and equality.... There are no doubt serious difficulties in the way. However, when one takes into consideration the advantages of the plan as the only means of conserving the independent existence of the associated nations, it is worthwhile to overcome all difficulties. The first step in the direction of a policy of force and security was the Polish plan for a federation with Czechoslovakia. We must go farther and declare that this our policy will embrace also the peoples of the eastern part of historical

Poland; that we will aim at the union of the whole territory of the Ukraine and White Russia with Poland based on freedom and equality. Such a declaration will clarify our attitude towards the Ukraine and White Russia, and also our attitude towards Russia. It will become clear that our aim is not the dismemberment and annihilation of the Ukrainian and White Russian nations but their freedom, unity, and life. We will thus deprive Stalin of the otherwise basically justified postulate of defending the unity of these nations.... Let us not fear a conflict with Russia, because we will not have created it. It has existed for a long time. We live quietly, without any far reaching ideas, behind the Riga frontier, and still we were attacked by Russia. Let us therefore not fool ourselves with the belief that Russia will respect our independence or frontiers. Let's rather see to it that the Ukraine and White Russia know and understand our political idea so that they may know what to expect from us and become our allies. Let's see that we win the unavoidable Polish-Russian conflict, and we can win it because it is now clear to everybody that a union with Russian imperialism only spells doom for all nations between Germany and Russia and that only a union of these nations with Poland can save them."

The author concludes that since the peasant movement will be the leading force of the future Poland, replacing the remnants of the nobility and gentry at the helm, the main obstacle to an understanding will be removed. The Ukrainian peasant traditionally opposed the Poles as representatives of the owning classes in his land. "A peasant Poland will inherit from the Poland of the gentry only the idea of freedom and equality, and will reject the material and moral heritage of the imperialistic magnates." /Note: The newspaper Polska Ludowa printed the quoted article as a "Contribution from the circles of our followers." The editors state that the "great idea based on our past" is making headway and captivating the imagination of many people in Poland. They announce that in a future article the practical possibilities of realizing the idea will be discussed.7

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